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ABSTRACT

Preparation of special educators in Poland is discussed in the context of the history of Polish education, the development of special education in Poland, and demographic and cultural factors. Currently, there are more than 250 special schools for the mentally retarded, as well as a considerable number of special classes within public schools. Various levels of interaction provided for exceptional students within the mainstream include cooperative programs between regular and special schools, and selected activities in regular schools for children from special schools. Until 1973, common practice has been to admit only experienced elementary teachers to the study of special education. Current guidelines recommend that a student in special education should first acquire experience in teaching nonhandicapped children. University preservice and inservice programs provide preparation in the following areas: blind, visually handicapped, deaf, hearing impaired, mentally retarded, severely handicapped, and socially maladjusted. Polish educational psychologists have recently stressed the importance of including psychological foundations in special education teacher training. (JW)

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TRAINING OF SPECIAL EDUCATORS IN POLAND[1]

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Current rapid advances in communication and mass media are at least somewhat responsible for interest in crosscultural and international issues in education. International studies became popular and we see even some journals in psychology and special education emphasizing "international" in the titles, e.g., School Psychology International, International Journal of Special Education, etc. This paper discusses preparation of special educators in Poland from the perspective of historical trends and present sociocultural developments.

Discussion of current special education personnel preparation in Poland should consider number of important demographic and cultural characteristics. Polish society continues to be culturally predominantly homogeneous and agrarian. Most Poles live in small towns and in villages which until recently had their own public school system. Educational problems associated with large urban metropolitan areas of multicultural societies are virtually unknown in Poland. Historically, Poland always has been a Central European State, exposed to strong Western European, primarily French influences. The history of Polish education has a long European

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tradition. It should be mentioned in this context that Cracow University is one of the oldest in Europe, established in 1364.

Developments of special education in Poland correspond to similar earliest efforts in Europe. Already in 1817, Institute for Deaf, Mute and Blind was established in Warsaw. In 1872, Paplonski, then director of the Institute organized in affiliation with the Institute yearly teacher training workshops for the elementary teachers interested in becoming teachers of the deaf, (Dziedzic, 1977). The first Polish Welfare and Training Center for severely and profoundly retarded children was established in Warsaw in 1904, (Burik, 1986).

A number of Polish educators and physicians were prominently associated with pedology movement, which emerged in Europe toward the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, (Holowinsky, in press). In 1909, professor Twardowski organized with a group of teachers in Lviv (at that time in Austro-Hungary) a pedological society. Next year (1910) similar society was organized in Cracow (Grudzinska, 1912). A Polish physician Yoteyko, who studies in Paris and Brussels and had strong background in physiology, psycho-physiology and psycholgy became one of the pioneers in pedology (Depaepe, 1985). She was one of the organizers of the first congress of pedology, held in Brussels, Belgium in 1911, which provided initiative for the establishment of the Faculte Internationale de Pedologie, (Depaepe, 1985). In the context of our discussion it is of interest to mention that at the Congress participated such noted

scholars of that time as Bekhtiarev and Jung. The role of Yoteyk at the Faculte Internationale de Pedologie in the subsequent development of Special Education in Poland, can be seen from the fact that among 30 foreign students in attendance in 1913-14, 17 were from Poland.

Since early 1920's, prior to the Second World War (1939), two individuals were prominently associated with the development of special education and school psychology in Poland, Maria Grzegorzewska (1888-1967) and Maria Grzywak-Kaczynska (b. 1886), (Dziedzic, 1977; Lipkowski, 1977; Kostrzewski, 1971).

Grzegorzewska has been known throughout Poland as the initiator and pioneer in Special Education. As a young student she traveled extensively throughout Europe studying in Paris and Brussels with then pioneers in the field of child study. She returned to Poland in 1919 and had been active in the field of special education until her death in 1967. Lipkowski (1977) considers her altruism and concern for the handicapped to be the primary motivating factors.

By comparison, it is interesting to observe that in the United States most pioneers in special education teacher training were also females, e.g., H. Deveraux, A. Morrison-Nash, M. Woods. Like Grzegorzewska, A. Morrison-Nash, a member of the Training School at Vineland Education Department, had been employed continuously as an educator from 1900 until 1963,

(Holowinsky, 1986). She organized in cooperation with the University of Pennsylvania, first workshops for teachers of the mentally retarded in the early 1920's.

Grzegorzewska was instrumental in the organization of the Institute of Special Education (Pedagogy) in Warsaw and was its director from 1922 until 1967, (Dziedzic, 1977).

Grzywak-Kaczynska studies history and psychology at the University of Lucern, Switzerland (1914-1916). After her return to Poland in 1916, worked as a highschool teacher and continued university studies. In 1925, Kacazynska went again to Switzerland where she studied with Piaget and Claparede at the J.J. Rousseau Institute and at the University of Geneva. Following her return to Poland she organized a center of school psychological services, the first such center in Poland and one of very few in Europe at the time.

In 1950's, programs for the mentally retarded were segregated into self-contained schools. In 1956, there were 120 special schools for the mentally retarded. In the 1960's there were 331 special classes within elementary schools with enrollment of over 5000 youngsters. By 1970's the number of such classes increased to 698, with an enrollment of nearly 11,000. Currently, there are over 250 special schools in Poland, in addition to a considerable number of special classes within public schools.

Handicapped pupils in Poland are educated in special pre-school facilities, special elementary schools, special

vocational schools, residential boarding schools, rehabilitation and therapeutic facilities as well as receiving home instruction (Belcerek, 1977). Various levels of interaction of exceptional children within the mainstream of education are also provided (Hulek, 1979) e.g., regular programs with some supplemental instruction; special classes within regular schools (there are presently in Poland over 1100 such classes for the mildly handicapped within public schools and 57 within vocational schools); selected activities in regular schools for children from special schools; construction of special schools in the vicintiy of regular schools and development between them of various forms of cooperation.

Intellectually subnormal population in Poland has been estimated to range from 1.3% to 2% of the general population. Polish psychologists are utilizing an IQ index in their classification of the mentally retarded. The ranges of the levels of classification are similar to the AAMD classification system. In addition to health examinations, psychological and social-developmental examinations are also conducted. An evaluation for the purpose of a special class placement consists of a detailed classroom observation, educational evaluation, psychological and medical evaluation. Structural classroom observation usually lasts one school year. Additionally, a detailed anecdotal record of the child's activities in maintained. The record also includes description of the role of parents and the extent of their cooperation with the school.

Detailed records with samples of the child's performance are sent to the child study team as additional information.

Initial efforts of professional personnel preparation were sporadic and the numbers of teachers graduating were inadequate for the needs. As was the case in the United States, first efforts in special education teacher training were in the area of mental retardation. In 1918-1920, short-term courses were organized for teachers of the mentally retarded children, which were reorganized in 1921 into half-year seminar in Special Education. In 1922, Institute of Special Education was organized and Grzegorzcwska became its first director (Dziedzic, 1977). Eventually the goal of the Institute was to train teachers for various conditions of exceptionalities and to conduct methodological research. Initially, the institute accepted as students only experienced elementary and secondary teachers. Duration of the study in the Institute lasted for one year. Very few teachers of special education were trained at a university level prior to 1970. Since 1922 The Institute of Special Education in Warsaw was the only higher level school training special education in Poland. Since 1970, The Institute has been allowed to offer masters degrees, (Tomasik and Zabczynska, 1975). The first university level chair of special education was established in 1958 at the university of Warsaw.

Since 1973, special educators in Poland are also prepared at eleven universities (Belcerek, 1977; Sękowska, 1983). The university study takes four years leading to the masters

degree in special education. Generic four year curriculum prepares teachers for elementary and secondary schools for mildly retarded children as well as retarded children with sensory difficulties. To keep this discussion in proper context, it should be mentioned that unlike universities in the USA, European universities are not divided into undergraduate and graduate levels. University education in general is synonymous with graduate education.

Significant expansion of teacher training programs in Special Education in Poland occurred in 1970's. A plan suggested by the "Committee of Experts" began to be implemental in early 1970's (Pawuła, 1987). In 1976, the State Institute of Special Education in Warsaw was reorganized into The Graduate School of Special Education, which in 1977 by permission of the Polish Ministry of Education began to offer post-graduate studies in Special Education. The areas of specialization include diagnosis and assessment of exceptionalities as well as the study of deaf, hard of hearing, chronically ill and socially maladaptive children.

Guidelines for the training of special educators have been developed by the special education team of The Pedagogical Science Committee of The Polish Academy of Sciences (Hulek, 1978).

Common practice until 1973, has been to admit to the study in special education only experienced elementary teachers. This practice has been introduced and fostered by Maria Grzagorzewska, (Hulek, 1979).

Guidelines recommend that a student in special education should first acquire experience in teaching nonhandicapped children before teaching the handicapped. The proposal stresses the need to know how to cooperate with various agencies and institutions. Teachers are also required to upgrade their education after graduation by attending various inservice programs.

Present programs of study include preservice and inservice preparation. Areas of study include: blind, visually handicapped, deaf, hard of hearing, mentally retarded, seriously handicapped, orthopedically handicapped, socially maladjusted. More recently, Polish educational psychologists (Strupczewska and Doroszewicz, 1980; Klar-Stefanska, 1980) stressed the importance of inclusion of psychological foundations into special education teacher training. They argue that teachers should be able to appreciate knowledge about learning process, individual differences of human development and value systems. In addition to preservice education and training, considerable emphasis has been placed upon inservice education. Most of the inservice training is conducted and coordinated by The Institute of Teacher Training and Educational research (Instytut Ksztalcenia Nauczycieli i Badan Oświatwych).

A number of schools on their own initiative organized self-instruction teams employing variety of audio-visual materials (Gilasiewicz, 1976).

Some notion about the numbers of special educators at the graduate level in the past decade in Poland can be obtained from Baron's (1974) article. He informs us that a masters level preparation in special education was introduced at the university of Cracow in 1964. Since that time the number of special educators with a masters degree in special education has been increasing gradually. For example, for the ten year period 1963-1973, The Graduate School of Education at Cracow University awarded 313 diplomas, of that number 212 received masters degrees and 101 advanced ceertificates. From 1965 through 1973, 281 students were accepted into the four year training sequence in special education. Attrition rate of 15.3% has been reported with 168 students completing the study in the four year period. Additionally, 46 students completed the study with one to two years delay.

Information on professional development of graduates of The Graduate School of Education at Warsaw University, has been provided by Tomasik and Zabczynska (1976). More students, who graduated from matriculated programs, than those who completed extension division training, were able to advance professionally. Among 212 graduates surveyed, 128 were employed as teachers, 50 as supervisors and 34 in various other capacities, e.g., counselors, inspectors, etc. More than half of those surveyed were interested in furthering their professional education. Nearly 32% of those employed as special educators indicated that they have someone in the family who

was or is a special educator. Up to 60% of graduates are engaged in continuing education or are persuing masters level training.

By comparison, it should be mentioned that teacher training at the graduate level in the USA has recently received considerable attention (The Holmes Group, 1986). Several universities in the United States are offering five-year and fifth year programs (Wilkinson, 1987).

Detailed analysis of the issues of special education personnel preparation in Poland has been recently presented by Hulek (1986). He reported that this issue was debated for number of years by the Didactic Team of The Ministry of Science, Higher Education and Technology.

Hulek (1986) informs us that issues of normalization and mainstreaming attracted interest of Polish special educators. He voices concern that many questions associated with normalization have not been carefully considered. He writes: "Those working on the problem of normalization have not fully perceived the relationship of the training of personnel for special education with various fields of education, economic and social life of the country and other relevant factors," (p. 261). It is of interest to point out that similar debate on mainstreaming took place in the United States a decade earlier, e.g., Meisgeier (1976).

Too early specialization is considered by Hulek (1986) as one of the weaknesses of teacher training. He reminds his

readers that in Poland prior to 1973, as well as in a number of other countries, candidates for teaching positions in special education first studied general education and had two years of experience teaching in regular programs. Hulek also argues, that special education teacher training should be shifted to post-graduate level and the student-teachers should be recruited from among the graduates of pedagogical departments.

Hulek (1986) interprets role of special educators very broadly, considering them as an integral part of the overall functioning of a rehabilitation team. He writes: "special pedagogues are needed in medical rehabilitation centers (teachers and educators at hospital and sanatorium schools), vocational rehabilitation centers (teachers of general and vocational subjects, educators and organizers of the teaching process) and social rehabilitation centers (e.g., in cooperation with the parents and guardians of disabled children, organization of leisure). There is a big demand for special pedagogues in cooperatives of the disabled (for basic rehabilitation and industrial plants (e.g., centers of industrial rehabilitation)," (p. 263).

In Poland, education in general, and special education in particular, strongly fostered the idea of "social preparation for vocational training." Hulek[1] informs us that:

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[1] A. Hulek, personal communication.

In Poland the idea of "social preparation for vocational training" was fostered by W. Przanowski (1913-1937) and W. Ambroziewicz (1882-1969). They developed and promoted in primary schools the subject "handiwork." Among special educators J. Korczak (1878-1942) was an advocate of the education through "social activities" and M. Grzegorzewska (1888-1967) adopted as the fundamental method for special primary schools the method of "labor centers." Among contemporary authors engaged in problems of "social preparation for vocatinal training" I. Szaniawski (1909-1982), T. Nowacki and Z. Wiatrowski are worth mentioning.

Since Poland is primarily an agricultural society, 60% of schoolchildren live in small villages where they attend basic elementary schools. This aspect of Polish special education was discussed by Las (1978), who described needs of community consolidated schools. For long time education in village schools lag behind education in cities and towns. For example, as recently as 1970's only 12% of eligible children who lived in villages attended preschool programs. It has been recognized that village schools required special set of skills from teachers. In general, there is a need to be involved more intensly with the family and the community. Cognizant of the special needs of village schools, Polish Ministry of Education issued a directive in March of 1973 creating community consoli-

dated schools. Las emphasized that the responsibility of a teacher does not end with the school, but that he/she should be involved significantly with the family of students. Concern has been expressed that the graduates of the four-year Special Education Pedagogical Institutes do not show interest working in rural areas.

Jarosz (1979) discussed needs for special education personnel in Poland for 1980's. Based upon surveys conducted in the 1970's, it has been estimated that by 1985 over 250,000 children CA 3-17 would have to be educated. This would have necessitated 11,000 more teachers in comparison to 1970's. Estimated 11,000 were needed in addition to 1300 special educators needed yearly to replace those who are retiring. Jarosz also suggested that the following recommendations should be implemented:

A. four year study of special education should prepare teachers for:

a) preschool and elementary school grades (1-111).

b) higher grades (IV-X) for schools of mentally retarded and deaf.

B. Special education preparation at the post-graduate level should prepare teachers for:

a) higher grades (IV-X) of special schools with normal programs.

b) theoretical and practical vocational study.

c) remedial education teachers.

d) teachers for residential facilities.

This suggestion to divide special education personnel preparation into two levels, e.g., four year and post-graduate, merits further attention.

In conclusion, it should be mentioned that many differences, but also similarities exist in the preparation of special education personnel in Poland when compared to the status of the special education teacher training in the United States.

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